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in the middle of the night and finds himself without food may, if he is brazen enough, get up, and while the owner is asleep, eat the leg of his howler monkey or the rib of his tapir. He must keep his tongue between his teeth, for to refuse food is the most frightful sin the Kaingáng can imagine. *Ndegn*, to refuse, has such an aura of destructive affect about it that every time I heard it it chilled my blood. To hear *ndegn* applied to food is to expect murder around the corner. In times of plenty it does not matter how much meat a man has; in times of hunger food passes through his fingers like water. Still, with all this each of the Kaingáng likes to take the biggest piece even when game is scarce. For one or two days the bellies of his children will be full, but soon the meat is all gone.

This possessive feeling about food applies with somewhat greater intensity to pine nuts. These are often gathered by a man and his wife. He climbs the tree and jumps around on the boughs until he dislodges the great five-pound cones; and then he descends and helps his wife gather them up and break them open to extract the nuts. They fill their yard-deep baskets, and what they cannot use immediately they bury in stream beds to preserve them. The theft of a full unburied basket is rare—I know of only one case—but the theft of nuts from the preservation beds is quite common. The nonchalance of the Kaingáng about these thefts is perplexing to the ethnologist steeped in the traditions of western culture and trained to expect conflicts after theft. Nevertheless I never knew the theft of a basket of nuts to create more than a one-day grumble. Indians would protest to me about property people had stolen, and they would tell me in no uncertain language what they thought of such people, but they never did anything about it. It is not possible to formulate precisely the movements of food in Kaingáng society. When one has said that the primary emphasis is on giving to affinal relatives, to parents and siblings, to hunting companions, and to the friends whom one has inherited from one's father, everything has been said that can be about the structuralization of food distribution.

Kaingáng property arrangements are not a matter of checks and balances which ensure that for every piece of meat which A gives to B he may expect a piece in return. It is impossible to make them understand any theory of exchange other than that of outright purchase which they have learnt from the whites. I tried in vain to make them understand that when I lent them a scythe to clear their fields they should give me a little corn when it became green. Their understanding of reciprocity is in terms of lifelong symbiosis, not in terms of balanced exchanges. No accounts are kept, but in the back of his mind each man knows who has been systematically helpful to him and who not. Many of the conflicts within the extended families arise out of some failure to live up to the ideal of constant

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422 helpfulness and support, and it is at this point that one of the greatest weaknesses of Kaingáng social structure becomes evident.

602 All of a person's brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, and first and second cousins are his *nungnyén*, and when a man marries, all of his wife's *nungnyén* become his in-laws. It is obvious that the number of any one person's in-laws will be enormous, especially when we consider the fact that he has in-laws not only through his wife but also through his own brothers and sisters and cousins and uncles and aunts. When we remember in addition how closely inbred Kaingáng extended families are it is at once evident that almost all the extended families may be in-laws to any one person. Since it is impossible to give attention to such an enormous number each man selects only a few. Owing to the fact that the lines of his selection are not defined for him, the group with which he throws in his lot is determined only by his own choice, and the character of the group of affinal relatives acknowledged by every individual is different. One man may associate principally with his wife's uncles and brothers, while another may ignore them almost entirely in favor of his sisters' husbands. There is no mechanism to fix and stabilize any kind of relationship. The consequent slighting or exclusion of some relatives and the general fluidity of the social scheme produce undercurrents of resentment that are ultimately drained off substitutively by the feuds.

596 Within the extended family feelings of rejection may be strong but they never break out into bloodshed. Although Vomblé did not see his brother-in-law Tokéle for a long time, all that passed between them when they met was words. "Tokéle used to shoot animals for me," said Vomblé, "but before he died he went away, so that I did not see him. [When I met him again I said to him,] 'I raided the Brazilians, but you went far away and I did not see you after that. I thought that when I went to attack the Brazilians you would follow me, but you did not. I was the companion of your [adoptive] father until he died; then I became angry with you. When your real father was killed[3] you were small, and he [the adoptive father] brought you up. At last you grew to manhood, but you went away and you did not see him die. Therefore I was angry with you. I thought to myself, if I were to see you I would be angry with you. *I am telling you this to no purpose.*' Then Tokéle said to me, 'I thought that you would be that way [angry]. When you went away I was going to follow you, but *yágn*[4] asked me [to go with him], and so I went with him. That is why I did not see *yágn* [his adoptive father] die. Are you going to be angry with me on that account?' 'Yes, I am. I went around with your *yágn* and suffered hunger

[3] In a feud.

[4] His adoptive father's brother who was also his wife's mother's brother and hence a relative by marriage.